

Bill title: Ocean Conservation, Education, and National Strategy for the 21st Century Act

Bill number: [H.R. 21](#)

Date introduced: January 6, 2009

Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife

Summary: This bill, known as Oceans-21, includes key recommendations made reports by both the Pew Ocean Commission in 2003 and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in 2004.

The ocean is critical to our nation for many reasons: many of our jobs, much of our food, and half of our air come from the ocean. Based on recent estimates, ocean-related activities directly contributed more than \$117 billion and more than 2 million jobs to the U.S. economy. But the lack of effective management of ocean activities has taken a toll on the ocean, jeopardizing not just jobs and revenue, but our health as well.

The national ocean policy recommended by the ocean commissions and numerous leading ocean science, management and policy experts would synchronize the activities of the multitude of federal agencies charged with managing ocean resources. Currently, more than 140 ocean-related laws are implemented by more than 20 agencies with no imperative to coordinate on their often overlapping jurisdictions with the result that conflicts abound and people and oceans suffer.

This bill would:

- Create a National Ocean Policy that includes principles for use and management of the ocean, coastline and Great Lakes.

- Consolidate and streamline national ocean management and promote ecosystem-based, regional ocean governance.
- Create regional and national ocean advisory committees; create an ocean advisor in the president's cabinet.
- Codify the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as the chief ocean agency.
- Establish an Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Trust Fund to support the Act's purposes and policies.

Following introduction of the bill, Rep. Farr said: "Industries tied to the ocean and Great Lakes pump billions into our economy, but those resources aren't infinite. We must treat these assets with the care they deserve. We're faced with collapsing fisheries, water quality problems, harmful algal blooms and dead zones and an increase in invasive species. It's time that Washington recognize these trends and work to correct them."